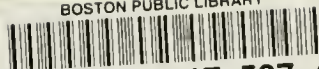


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NATIONAL RECOVERY ADMINISTRATION

APR 8 1936

DIVISION OF REVIEW

EVIDENCE STUDY

NO. 14

C  
OF

THE FURNITURE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Prepared by

ROBERT K. LYLE

August, 1935

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

(NOT FOR RELEASE: FOR USE IN DIVISION ONLY)



## THE EVIDENCE STUDY SERIES

The EVIDENCE STUDIES were originally planned as a means of gathering evidence bearing upon various legal issues which arose under the National Industrial Recovery Act.

These studies have value quite aside from the use for which they were originally intended. Accordingly, they are now made available for confidential use within the Division of Review, and for inclusion in Code Histories.

The full list of the Evidence Studies is as follows:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
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| 18. Hosiery Ind.                    | 40. Trucking Industry                     |
| 19. Infant's & Children's Wear Ind. | 41. Waste Materials Ind.                  |
| 20. Iron and Steel Ind.             | 42. Wholesale & Retail Food Ind. (See No. |
| 21. Leather                         | 43. Wholesale Fresh Fruit & Veg. 31)      |
| 22. Lumber & Timber Prod. Ind.      |   |

In addition to the studies brought to completion, certain materials have been assembled for other industries. These MATERIALS are included in the series and are also made available for confidential use within the Division of Review and for inclusion in Code Histories, as follows:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 44. Wool Textile Industry          | 49. Household Goods & Storage, etc. (Dropped)    |
| 45. Automotive Parts & Equip. Ind. | 50. Motor Vehicle Retailing Trade Ind. (Dropped) |
| 46. Baking Industry                | 51. Retail Tire & Battery Trade Ind.             |
| 47. Canning Industry               | 52. Ship & Boat Bldg. & Repairing Ind.           |
| 48. Coat and Suit Ind.             | 53. Wholesaling or Distributing Trade            |

L. C. Marshall  
Director, Division of Review

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## THE FURNITURE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY 1/

## Chapter I

## NATURE OF THE INDUSTRY

Code Definition

The Industry as defined by the Code covers the manufacture or production of products commonly known as "household furniture" (other than mattresses, pillows, and box springs), whether used in the home or elsewhere; wood office chairs, wood office desks, wood office tables, parlor frames, chairs in the white, furniture parts made of wood, and other unfinished household furniture.

Under Code operation many other special items, such as card tables, smoking stands, foot stools, book ends, book racks, porch and patio furniture, metal porch furniture, garden tables and chairs, camp stools and chairs, and steamer chairs were classified as being products of the Furniture Manufacturing Industry, whether made of wood or metal.

The Bureau of the Census classification for this Industry, embraces establishments engaged in the manufacture of furniture made of wood, metal, fiber, reed, rattan, and willow; and data are in some cases broken down for four general classes, as follows:

(1) Household furniture - furniture commonly used in dwellings, including hammocks and sewing machine cases and cabinets.

(2) Furniture and fixtures for offices and stores - desks, chairs, lockers, shelving, counters, tables, partitions, window backs, show cases, wall cases, cabinets, and other office and store furniture and fixtures.

(3) Professional, laboratory, hospital, barber, and beauty-parlor chairs, tables, cots, etc.

(4) Furniture for public buildings - including schools, theaters, halls, churches, and seats for public conveyances.

Therefore, general statistics of the Bureau of the Census, in addition to covering the Furniture Manufacturing Industry as defined by the Code also cover either completely or in part, the following Coded Industries:

Business Furniture, Storage Equipment Filing Supply  
Industry (Code No. 88)

Commercial Fixtures Industry (Code No. 415)

Metal Hospital Furniture (Code No. 527)

Public Seating (Code No. 477)

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1/ Various topics mentioned in the outline -- particularly those listed in Sections V and VI -- are not covered in this Report because of the lack of pertinent information.





However, since the category "household furniture," which constitutes by far the major part of the Industry as defined by the Code, accounts for 70 to 80 per cent of the total value of the product as reported by the Census and since the Code in addition covered some other groups the Census data may be considered roughly applicable to the Industry as covered by the Code.

### Description of the Industry

It is difficult to present a general description of the Furniture Manufacturing Industry. Household furniture as it enters into commerce is not a standard product. Thousands of different articles are made, and there is tremendous variation among them as to design, construction, and type of material used.

Seldom do any two factories make the same pattern and there is a wide variation in the quality of the product. Some manufacturers make only bedroom furniture, others make dining-room or living-room or upholstered furniture, while others make one or more of the types mentioned. In the production of the higher grades or quality products, it is not uncommon for one company to make all of the above types while other manufacturers specialize on particular products such as chairs, tables, desks, breakfast sets, and specialties.

Manufacturing processes vary according to the type and quality of the product, special order work and the finer types of all kinds of furniture being produced largely by hand labor and highly skilled artisans, while other types of cheaper goods are produced by modern mass production methods. There are innumerable gradations between the two extremes, depending largely upon the price range in which the manufacturer is doing business.

### Number of Establishments

The number of furniture manufacturing establishments as reported under the Census classification for the Industry is presented in Table I.

TABLE I  
NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS,  
ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING

Year	Number
1921	3,038
1923	3,047
1925	3,239
1927	3,228
1929	3,778
1931	3,148
1933	2,411

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture." Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.



In 1929, the peak year, the 3,778 plants reporting were located in 44 states (522 counties). There were but five states, namely, Idaho, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, for which the Bureau of the Census did not publish data. Nearly 40 per cent of all establishments were concentrated in three states -- New York had 20 per cent of the total; Illinois, 10; and California 9 per cent. This percentage distribution does not hold, however, in relation to employees, production, and other statistical facts.

The total number of establishments reporting to the Census Bureau in 1931 and 1933 fell from the 1929 peak of 3,778 to 3,148 and 2,411 respectively, representing a percentage decline of approximately 17 and 36.

### Geographical Distribution

The distribution of establishments among the 11 leading producing states for the years 1929, 1931, and 1933 is shown in Table II.

According to records of the National Association of Furniture Manufacturers, household furniture was produced in 589 cities, 449 of which had less than 50,000 inhabitants. Of the 2,083 manufacturers listed in its records, 842 were located in the 449 cities of under 50,000 inhabitants, and spread over 39 states.

TABLE II  
NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS IN ALL FURNITURE  
MANUFACTURING, BY PRINCIPAL STATES a/

State	1929	1931	1933
U. S. Total	3,778	3,148	2,411
California	339	272	206
Illinois	375	315	243
Indiana	199	159	128
Massachusetts	217	204	181
Michigan	209	165	128
Missouri	98	83	54
New York	772	666	484
North Carolina	146	116	101
Ohio	211	163	128
Pennsylvania	265	245	200
Wisconsin	111	90	69
Total 11 States	2,942	2,478	1,922
Total 37 Other States	836	670	489

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture." Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are not included.

a/ Data include establishments manufacturing household furniture, furniture and fixtures for offices, stores, professional laboratory, hospital, barber and beauty parlor furniture, and furniture for public buildings.



Size of Units

For the most part this Industry is composed of relatively small units. It is not dominated by a few producers or by any one section of the Industry. It is characterized by intense competition and pronounced individualism. (Compare Table X below)

Total Production of All Furniture

According to the Census of Manufactures, all products classified as furniture in 1929 had a total value of \$948,116,358. Similar figures for the years 1931 and 1933, which show the trend of production during depression years, are \$482,289,230 for the former year, and \$297,729,981 for the latter. The declines from the 1929 peak amounted to approximately 49 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively.

Table III shows value of product in all furniture manufacturing by the 11 principal producing states, for the years 1929, 1931, and 1933. These states accounted for 84 per cent of total production in 1929, 83 per cent in 1931, and 82 per cent in 1933.

TABLE III  
VALUE OF PRODUCT, IN ALL FURNITURE  
MANUFACTURING, BY PRINCIPAL STATES a/  
(In Thousands)

State	1929	1931	1933
U. S. Total	\$948,116	\$482,289	\$297,730
California	44,996	25,143	13,188
Illinois	130,535	47,367	28,782
Indiana	83,496	32,659	21,269
Massachusetts	41,922	24,144	15,497
Michigan	99,715	42,721	23,330
New York	159,772	90,247	50,363
North Carolina	56,737	33,820	26,625
Ohio	60,577	32,248	18,332
Pennsylvania	55,512	31,709	19,280
Virginia	28,221	22,907	16,281
Wisconsin	36,640	18,078	11,803
Total 11 States	798,123	401,043	244,750
Total 37 Other States	149,993	81,246	52,980

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture." Establishments with annual value of product less than \$5,000 are not included.

a/ Data include establishments manufacturing household furniture, furniture and fixtures for offices and stores, professional laboratory, hospital, barber and beauty parlor, furniture for public buildings.



Production of Household Furniture

The Census of Manufactures data presented in Table V show the value of product of household furniture, by kind and material. Values reported for the kind designated as "household" furniture for the years 1929, and 1931, and 1933, and specifically covered by the Furniture Manufacturing Industry Code, as shown in Table IV, were \$659,023,309, \$350,979,529, and \$235,308,639 respectively, representing approximately 70 per cent, 73 per cent, and 79 per cent of all kinds of furniture included in the Census classification.

TABLE IV  
VALUE OF PRODUCT,  
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE AND ALL FURNITURE  
(In Thousands)

Item	1929	1931	1933
All Furniture	\$948,116	\$482,289	\$297,730
Household Furniture	659,023	350,980	235,309
Per cent household if of total	69.5	72.8	79.0

Source: Census of Manufactures, 1933, "Furniture." Establishments with annual value of product of less than \$5,000 are not included.

The percentage decline in value of production of household furniture from the 1929 level was 47 per cent in 1931, and 64 per cent in 1933. This indicates that the value of household furniture produced declined during the depression years slightly less than did furniture production as a whole.





Kind	Wood		Metal		Fiber, Rattan Reed and Willow				
	1929 \$	1931	1933	1929 \$	1931	1933	1929 \$	1931	1933
Total	611,681	316,785	212,211	30,443	26,792	20,399	16,899	7,402	2,698
Living Room and									
Livory	325,246	155,002	91,276	3,350	3,010	7,236	12,524	5,311	1,198
Bedroom	139,775	79,689	58,402	17,344	14,042	6,923	32	35	6
Dining Room	88,552	47,319	33,574	-	-	-	57	64	14
Kitchen	21,123	11,794	7,237	2,422	1,293	663	-	-	-
Porch	3,878	2,440	1,532	2,347	3,137	2,626	3,076	1,629	737
Camp	3,336	2,247	1,397	507	2,435	672	-	-	-
Hall	1,391	857	129	-	-	-	b/	b/	84
Juvenile	b/	b/	1,658	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous									
and Not									
Specified	28,380	17,437	17,006	4,475	2,875	2,279	1,210	363	659

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture," Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.

a/ Data refer to sales, and do not include value of furniture made as a secondary product in other industries.  
b/ Not reported separately.



Production of Wood Household Furniture,  
by States

According to Census figures, wood household furniture production in 1931 aggregated \$316,785,173. The distribution of value of product among the leading producing states is shown in Table VI. These eleven states accounted for \$256,374,733, or 81 per cent of the whole production of wood household furniture.

TABLE VI  
VALUE OF PRODUCTION OF WOOD HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE,  
BY PRINCIPAL STATES, 1931

State	Value of Product
U. S. Total	\$316,785,173
New York	49,469,532
North Carolina	31,950,477
Illinois	28,362,774
Indiana	27,098,912
Pennsylvania	23,408,482
Virginia	22,186,912
Michigan	19,974,999
California	16,121,101
Massachusetts	14,702,439
Ohio	13,175,442
Wisconsin	9,923,663
Other States	60,410,440

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture." Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.

Production Per Concern

Table VII shows the Census of Manufactures data tabulated to classify concerns according to value of product per concern in 1931. It should be noted that these figures cover the usual Census classification, that is, all sorts of furniture - household, office and store, hospital, public buildings, and the like. From this table it has been computed that a little more than 36 per cent of the manufacturers covered by the Census report for 1931 produced about 83 per cent of the total value of production; the remaining 63 per cent producing only 17 per cent. It is reasonable to assume that a similar percentage relationship holds true for the production of household furniture.



TABLE VII

PRODUCTION AND NUMBER OF CONCERNS  
IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING,  
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO VALUE OF PRODUCT, 1931 a/

Value of Product per Concern	Number of Concerns	Total Value of Production
Total	3,148	\$482,289,230
\$5,000 to \$19,999	709	8,264,040
20,000 to 49,999	707	23,311,841
50,000 to 99,999	572	41,091,907
100,000 to 249,999	656	104,114,562
250,000 to 499,999	303	104,098,873
500,000 to 999,999	141	94,612,783
1,000,000 to 2,499,999	52	76,763,382
2,500,000 and over	8	30,031,922

Source: Basic data from Census of Manufactures, 1931; tabulation prepared by the Code Authority, and published in Appendix of the Transcript of Hearings on the Code for Furniture Manufacturing Industry.

a/ Data include establishments manufacturing household furniture, furniture and fixtures for offices and stores, professional laboratory, hospital, barber and beauty parlor furniture, and furniture for public buildings.

Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.



CHAPTER II  
LABOR STATISTICS 1/

Number of Employees, by Principal States

According to the Census, the Furniture Manufacturing Industry employed 193,399 wage earners in 1929. Employment dropped to 105,488 in 1933, and recovered to 107,100 in 1934. The number employed in the principal furniture producing states during 1929, 1931, and 1933, and the United States total in 1934, are tabulated in Table VIII and present a rather uniform decline within each state except Virginia, for each successive period up to 1934, when a slight increase is reported.

TABLE VIII  
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING,  
BY PRINCIPAL STATES a/

State	1929	1931	1933	1934
U. S. Total	193,399	127,605	105,488	107,100
California	7,931	5,589	4,083	
Illinois	23,767	12,069	10,055	
Indiana	18,700	11,013	8,722	
Massachusetts	8,598	6,153	5,357	
Michigan	20,941	11,485	9,026	
New York	25,220	13,291	13,159	
North Carolina	15,609	12,278	11,809	
Ohio	10,707	7,158	6,167	
Pennsylvania	12,159	8,526	7,023	
Virginia	6,285	6,483	6,559	
Wisconsin	8,714	5,808	4,835	
Total 11 States	158,631	104,854	86,795	
Total 37 Other States	34,768	22,751	18,693	

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture." 1934 figure computed by use of Bureau of Labor Statistics index as published in Trend of Employment. Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.

- a/ Data cover the four Census Classes: (1) Household Furniture.  
(2) Furniture and fixtures, for stores and offices.  
(3) Professional laboratory, hospital, barber and beauty parlor furniture and  
(4) Furniture for Public Buildings.

1/ For additional labor data, see the Appendix.





## Sectional Distribution of Employees

The Census of Manufactures shows that during 1929 and 1931 states designated as being in the Northern Area employed 79.6 and 78.8 per cent, respectively, of the total number of wage earners employed in the Furniture Industry; and that southern states accounted for 20.4 and 23.2 per cent of the total employment reported.

## Wage Earners Classified by Size of Establishment

Table IX gives the distribution of wage earners among establishments classified according to number of employees. It shows that in 1929 nearly three quarters of the total number of establishments, in which only about one-fifth of the total wage earners were employed, were relatively small in size, averaging not more than 50 workers per establishment. More wage earners -- about 30 per cent of the total -- were employed in plants averaging 100 to 250 employees than in any of the other size groups.

TABLE IX  
WAGE EARNERS IN ESTABLISHMENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING  
TO NUMBER OF WAGE EARNERS, 1929

Number of Wage Earners Per Estab- lishment	Establishments			Wage Earners			
	Number	Per Cent of Total	Cumulative	Number	Per Cent of Total	Cumulative	
			Per Cent of Total			Per Cent of Total	
1 -	5	1,037	27.5	27.5	2,665	1.4	1.4
6 -	20	1,010	26.8	54.3	12,423	6.4	7.8
21 -	50	745	19.8	74.1	24,752	12.8	20.6
51 -	100	471	12.5	86.6	34,172	17.7	38.3
101 -	250	382	10.2	96.8	59,211	30.6	68.9
251 -	500	88	2.3	99.1	29,636	15.3	84.2
501 -	1,000	24	.6	99.7	16,180	8.4	92.6
1,001 and over	8		.3	100.0	14,355	7.4	100.0
Total	3,765	a/100.0	100.0	193,399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Census of Manufactures (1929) Vol. I, page 67. Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.

a/ Total establishments reported as 3,778, but 13 of these were classified as having "No wage earners."

## Classification of Wage Earners by Sex

The Census of Manufactures for 1929 shows the total number of wage earners by sex. The Industry then employed 131,609 males and 11,791 females -- 93.9 and 6.1 per cent of the whole, respectively.



Full Time Hours Per Week

Table X shows the average full-time hours per week in the Furniture Manufacturing Industry, both for the United States as a whole and for leading producing states, in 1929 and 1931.

TABLE X  
AVERAGE FULL-TIME HOURS PER WEEK  
IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING,  
BY PRINCIPAL STATES

State	1929	1931
U. S. Total	51.9	51.8
California	46.9	47.2
Georgia	55.1	55.0
Illinois	50.0	50.1
Indiana	52.6	51.5
Kentucky	57.0	54.2
Maryland	51.0	49.5
Massachusetts	48.2	47.4
Michigan	51.2	51.0
Missouri	51.8	50.8
New Jersey	48.9	48.8
New York	51.2	51.2
North Carolina	55.0	54.1
Ohio	53.3	53.5
Pennsylvania	53.1	53.2
Tennessee	54.5	52.3
Virginia	55.0	55.0
Wisconsin	53.3	53.3

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Wages and Hours of Labor in the Furniture Industry, 1910-1931 (Bulletin 571).

Coverage of samples used is 23 per cent of employment in 1929, and 24 per cent in 1931.

Actual Hours Worked per Week

Average full-time hours means virtually "average maximum work week," for it represents the number of hours a man would work if he worked six days a week at the prevailing number of hours per day. However, most wage earners do not work six days a week; when the average full-time week is, say, 54 hours (six days of nine hours each), many a wage earner will work only four days, making his actual work week 36 hours. The Bureau of Labor Statistics started reporting average actual hours in 1932. These data are presented in Table XI.



TABLE XI

AVERAGE ACTUAL HOURS PER WEEK  
IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING

Year	Hours
1929	46.8
1931	39.7
1933	35.8
1934	34.5

Source: 1929 and 1931 data are from National Industrial Conference Board Service Letters; 1933 and 1934 from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Trend of Employment.

These figures are averages for the entire industry as defined by the Census. It will be noted that even though the Code permitted a maximum of 40 hours per week during 1934, the average for the year was about 12 per cent less, or 34.5 hours. 1/

Average Hourly Wages.

The Department of Labor has made two extensive studies entitled "Wages and Hours of Labor in the Furniture Industry," one covering 1929 and the other covering 1931. Its findings were published in Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletins Numbers 526 and 571.

The wage figures used were obtained from payrolls or other records by agents of the Department of Labor from representative furniture factories. in 17 states, the principal product of these factories being wooden household furniture.

Average wage rates per hour in each of these 17 states during 1929 and 1931 are recorded in Table XII.

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1/ Testimony appearing on page 47 of the transcript of the Public Hearing on the Furniture Industry Code to the effect that the industry normally operated an average of 55 hours per week probably meant that during 1929 a great many furniture factories had a full-time work week of 55 hours.



TABLE XII  
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES  
IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING,  
BY PRINCIPAL STATES  
(In Cents)

State	1929	1931
U. S. Total	49.0	41.1
California	59.1	52.1
Georgia	28.9	24.1
Illinois	59.3	48.8
Indiana	43.4	39.4
Kentucky	45.3	38.3
Maryland	50.5	47.1
Massachusetts	62.0	58.1
Michigan	53.5	44.9
Missouri	46.7	42.5
New Jersey	61.5	58.0
New York	55.8	46.9
North Carolina	33.1	28.6
Ohio	48.5	42.5
Pennsylvania	47.1	41.3
Tennessee	31.3	26.6
Virginia	29.6	23.6
Wisconsin	44.5	42.0

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Wages and Hours of Labor in the Furniture Industry, 1910-1931 (Bulletin 571). Coverage of samples used is 23 per cent of employment in 1929 and 24 per cent in 1931.

#### Sectional Hourly Wage Rates

Since the approved Code set up two minimum wages -- one for the North and one for the South -- average hourly wage rates for the two geographical sections are presented in Table XIII

TABLE XIII  
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES, NORTH AND SOUTH,  
BY SEX

Year	Males		Females	
	North	South	North	South
1929	53.8	34.7	36.5	19.1
1931	46.6	28.9	33.8	18.7

Source: Basic data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Wages and Hours of Labor in the Furniture Industry (Bulletins Number 526 and 571), Table A.





### Average Weekly Earnings

Table XIV shows the course of average weekly earnings from 1929 to 1934. Not a great deal of the decline from 1929 to 1933 was regained in 1934, due presumably to relatively short work weeks.

Data are also presented to show hourly rates for the years 1929, 1931, 1933, and 1934. The averages given for 1929 and 1931 differ somewhat from those shown in Table XII, due to the fact that both the sample and the source are different.

TABLE XIV  
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES, AND AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES,  
IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING

Year	Average Hourly Wage <u>a/</u>	Average Weekly Wage <u>b/</u>
1929	\$.467	\$24.41
1931	.435	18.18
1933	.366	13.43
1934	.444	15.42

Source: As indicated in footnotes.

a/ 1929 and 1931 data are National Industrial Conference Board figures multiplied by 0.85 to make them comparable with Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 1933 and 1934.

b/ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Trend of Employment.



## Chapter III

## RAW MATERIALS

Principal Materials Consumed

Lumber products consisting of logs, hardwood, soft-wood, plywood and veneers constitute the basic material used in the manufacture of household furniture. Other necessary materials are fabricated iron, steel, and wire; textiles; paint and varnish; glass; twine; and leather products.

Cost of Materials Compared with Total  
Value of Product

As shown in Table XV in 1929, the cost of materials was 43.8 per cent of the value of the finished product. During the depression years the percentage which materials cost is of total value showed successive increases -- 47.9 being the percentage in 1933. According to data prepared by the trade associations, costs of materials and supplies registered a further increase during 1934 without a compensating increase in the sale price of the product into which they entered.

TABLE XV

TOTAL VALUE OF PRODUCT, TOTAL LABOR COST,  
AND TOTAL COST OF MATERIALS  
IN ALL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING

Year	Total Value of Product (000's)	Total Labor Cost		Total Materials Cost	
		Amount (000's)	Per Cent of Total	Amount (000's)	Per Cent of Total
1929	\$948,116 <u>a/</u>	\$242,832	25.6	\$415,650	43.8
1931	482,289	125,972	26.1	217,896 <u>b/</u>	45.2
1933	297,730	76,346	25.6	142,587 <u>b/</u>	47.9

Source: Census of Manufactures, "Furniture." Establishments whose annual production is less than \$5,000 are excluded.

a/ Represents sales (shipments and deliveries); other years represents production.

b/ Includes purchase of fuel and electrical energy. The cost of fuel and energy is about 3 per cent of the total cost.



## Chapter IV

### DISTRIBUTION

#### Methods of Distribution

The greater part of all household furniture is produced for stock and from there it is sold to retailers which include retail furniture stores, department stores, and in smaller towns, general merchandise stores. Much furniture is distributed to the consuming public through mail order houses, which, as a rule place contracts for their requirements over periods of six to twelve months, and often contract for the entire output of one or more plants.

Hotels, clubs, public buildings, etc., usually contract directly with manufacturers for their furniture requirements.

#### Number of Distributors

The only available statistical data as to the number of concerns which distribute furniture products are the Bureau of the Census figures shown in Table XVI.



TABLE XVI

NUMBER OF WHOLESALE AND RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS  
DISTRIBUTING PRODUCTS OF THE INDUSTRY,  
BY PRINCIPAL STATES

	Number of Wholesale <u>a/</u> Establishments		Number of Retail Stores <u>b/</u>	
	1929	1933	1929	1933
U. S. Total	1,146	730	25,153	17,418
California	137	72	1,239	752
Illinois	103	100	1,439	1,017
Massachusetts	47	35	751	604
Michigan	38	23	838	569
Missouri	36	19	811	557
New Jersey	13	9	667	511
New York	296	190	2,618	1,927
Ohio	67	35	1,280	907
Pennsylvania	89	55	1,898	1,293
Texas	34	23	1,339	806
Total 10 States	360	561	12,880	8,943
Total 38 Other States	286	169	12,273	8,475

Source: Census of Wholesale Distribution, Table 2 A, and  
Census of Retail Distribution, Table D.

a/ Wholesale establishments included: antique goods, furniture, general line, household, office, second-hand and specialty lines; importers have been excluded.

b/ Retail establishments included: furniture stores, furniture stores and undertaker, furniture and hardware stores.





## Chapter V

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Trade Associations

The leading trade association is the National Association of Furniture Manufacturers, Incorporated, organized in 1928. This association succeeded the National Alliance of Furniture Manufacturers and other allied organizations which had existed over a period of forty years prior to disbanding in 1928, as a result of prosecution by the Federal Trade Commission under the Sherman Anti-Trust Law. In 1933 the National Association of Furniture Manufacturers reported a membership of over 550 manufacturers.

The second most active trade association is the Southern Furniture Manufacturers Association, organized in 1911 as a combination of existing organizations. This association reported a membership in 1933 of about 150 of the leading furniture manufacturers in its district.

These two associations cover between them the entire field of household furniture manufacturing in the United States. The Southern Association dominates in the territory south of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. The National Association covers all other territory, and also has a smattering of members in the Southern Association territory. Public testimony indicates that membership in these two organizations, together with supporting local associations, represents well over 90 per cent of the household furniture produced in the United States.

Two other specific trade associations in this industry are the Wood Office Chair Manufacturers Association, and the National Association of Wood Office Desks and Tables, which have a combined membership of over 50 manufacturers and represent over 80 per cent of the total production in these lines.

Exports

The value of furniture exported when compared with the total amount produced is insignificant. Records show the value of that exported in 1929 to have been \$3,360,000. By 1934 this had declined to \$919,793.

TABLE XVII

VALUE OF PRODUCTS EXPORTED,  
BY PRINCIPAL GROUPS

Group	1929	1931	1933	1934
Total	\$6,360,000	\$1,743,531	\$676,989	\$919,793
Chairs	795,000	244,206	106,893	151,760
Other Metal				
Furniture	1,948,000	379,671	127,393	179,619
Wood Office Fur-				
niture and store				
fixtures	549,000	154,239	44,156	67,563
Other wood, willow				
and wicker Furni-				
ture	3,068,000	965,415	398,547	520,791



TABLE XVII (Continued)

Source: Foreign Commerce and Navigation, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.

List of Experts

The following list gives the names of several men thoroughly acquainted with the Industry:

Dr. A. P. Haake, General Manager  
National Association of Furniture Manufacturers,  
666 Lake Shore Drive,  
Chicago, Illinois.

C. B. Irwin  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

J. T. Ryan, Secretary,  
Southern Furniture Manufacturers Association,  
High Point, North Carolina.



APPENDIX

LABOR DATA

The labor data presented here are unpublished data resulting from a special tabulation made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in cooperation with the Division of Research and Planning, NRA. The special labor data presented here for the years 1933 and 1934 are the best available for the Industry as defined by the Code. They represent exclusively those branches of the Furniture Manufacturing Industry covered by the Furniture Manufacturing Code. The published Bureau of Labor Statistics data for furniture manufacturing are based upon the Census definition of the Industry, which includes, in addition to household furniture, the four groups listed on page 2, above.

For this reason, the published Bureau of Labor Statistics data used in Chapter II are not exactly comparable with the data presented in this Appendix. However, since household furniture accounts for 70 to 80 per cent of the total value of product in the Industry as defined by the Census, and since the Code also covers the manufacture of some office desks, chairs, and tables, the published Bureau of Labor Statistics data are reasonably representative of the Code Industry.



APPENDIX

TABLE I

EMPLOYMENT, PAYROLLS, HOURS AND WAGES,  
1933-1934 a/

Year and Month	Index, 1933 = 100			Average	Wages	
	Employ- ment <u>c/</u>	Pay- rolls <u>c/</u>	Man- hours <u>d/</u>	Hours Worked per Week <u>e/</u>	Average Hourly <u>e/</u> (Cents)	Average Weekly <u>c/</u> (Dollars)
1933						
January	84.5	67.6	69.2	30.1	32.5	10.73
February	84.5	71.2	76.8	33.4	30.8	11.30
March	75.7	53.3	61.2	29.7	30.1	9.37
April	77.7	63.2	71.7	33.9	30.5	10.75
May	84.6	74.0	87.8	38.1	29.1	11.56
June	93.4	89.3	106.1	41.7	29.2	12.60
July	101.6	98.5	118.4	42.8	28.9	12.71
August	113.0	128.5	125.9	40.9	36.3	14.94
September	126.6	153.4	132.1	38.3	41.3	15.92
October	130.0	159.9	138.8	39.2	41.4	16.06
November	119.6	130.0	116.0	35.6	41.6	14.09
December	108.8	111.1	96.0	32.4	42.6	13.25
Average	100.0	100.0	100.0	36.3	34.5	12.77
1934						
January	97.8	95.6	78.6	29.5	43.3	12.64
February	101.8	112.9	96.5	34.8	41.1	14.41
March	101.7	111.7	94.7	34.2	41.2	14.22
April	97.4	107.7	90.7	34.2	42.1	14.38
May	97.6	107.1	89.1	33.5	42.8	14.35
June	100.2	109.7	91.7	33.6	42.5	14.36
July	100.5	106.0	87.6	32.0	42.9	13.86
August	103.4	119.0	97.4	34.7	43.0	15.11
September	107.0	125.3	102.9	35.3	43.3	15.16
October	109.5	132.0	109.2	36.6	42.7	15.75
November	107.8	126.9	103.4	35.2	43.4	15.40
December	107.0	129.8	105.2	36.1	43.6	15.85
Average	102.6	115.3	95.6	34.1	42.7	14.62

Source: Unpublished data secured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in cooperation with the Division of Research and Planning, NRA.

a/ Reporting establishments considered to be almost completely covered by the Furniture Manufacturing Industry Code.

(Footnotes Continued  
on Following Page)





TABLE I  
(Continued)

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- b/ Figures reported were for the payroll period nearest the 15th of the month.
  - c/ Based upon a representative sample covering an average of about 260 establishments and nearly 30,150 employees in 1933. The sample was considerably larger in 1934.
  - d/ Computed: Index of employment times average hours worked per week reduced to 1933 = 100.
  - e/ Based upon a representative sample covering an average of 145 establishments and nearly 17,600 employees in 1933. The sample was much larger in 1934.









